



**Testimony on HB 894
Land Use – Transit-Oriented Development
House Economic Matters Committee**

**Date: March 3, 2026
Position: FAVORABLE**

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is a statewide evidence-based organization of over 800 physicians and other health professionals and supporters that addresses existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis, and toxic chemicals, as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, racial, and social justice.

CPSR strongly supports HB 894, which would promote dense, mixed-use development near transit stations.

As described by the Maryland Department of Transportation, “The Moore-Miller 2024 State Plan highlights TOD as an important tool in tackling the affordable housing shortage and leveraging infrastructure to bolster inclusive economic growth. MDOT actively promotes TOD as an approach to help increase transit ridership, support economic development, and maximize the efficient use of transportation infrastructure.”

Those are important reasons to support TOD, as is the fact that TOD can reduce sprawl development, which forces more dependence on cars and eats up open space; but I want to focus on the environmental impact of this different approach to development. Promoting the use of transit and emphasizing mixed use development result in decreased dependence on automobiles. This results in decreased burning of fossil fuels and therefore decreased pollution and decreased production of GreenHouse Gases.

This is important not only because of the significant local health effects of fossil fuel pollution but very significantly because of the climate chaos resulting from GreenHouse Gases. We are not talking about inconveniences. The hurricanes and massive fires in our country are only a part of the picture. Droughts, heat emergencies, desertification, floods, sea level rise – all these lead to terrible human suffering, destabilize societies, and lead to mass migration, destabilizing other societies and triggering wars. As these impacts multiply, there is a real risk of catastrophic changes to our civilization. **These are very real dangers**, but as a society we are just not taking them seriously. You, however, as leaders in Maryland, can take actions to change that.

This promotion of TOD is in fact only a very small step, but every step that we take to reduce GreenHouse Gas production decreases our contribution to the climate crisis. In addition, changing our approach to development in this way can be a step towards a culture shift in our society – from car-centered development to human-centered development. These are changes that have effects over generations.

Our motto at CPSR, and a principle of public health, is **WE MUST PREVENT WHAT WE CANNOT CURE**. That is why we support this bill and urge you to give a **favorable report on HB 894**.